

Excellence attracts Excellence:
Recruiting Top Students to the UA

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Overview of The Honors College

The Honors College is at the heart of the mission and strategic goals of the University of Arizona. Now in its 45th year, The Honors College is a university-wide academic college that serves nearly 4000 high ability undergraduates at The University of Arizona. A strong and thriving Honors College is vital to the recruitment, retention and graduation of talented students at the UA. The College recruits high ability students to the University and plays an active role in building a more academically robust and diverse student body. Once students enroll at the UA, The Honors College creates a culture for them that supports academic excellence, interdisciplinary interests, and lifelong success. The College challenges students to set high expectations for their academic engagement and provides support so that students can reach their educational and career goals. The Honors College is vital in creating a challenging academic atmosphere for non-Honors undergraduates. As all Honors students are seamlessly integrated into all colleges and programs on campus, the classroom is infused with greater academic stimulation, enhancing the experience for all students.

The mission of the Honors College is to foster an enduring spirit of inquiry and discovery so that artistically and academically talented students develop the courage to address uncommon challenges and the commitment to promote social responsibility throughout their lives.

The vision of The Honors College is to be a premier Honors College within the American Association of Universities (AAU).

The values guiding the mission and vision of The Honors College are:

- **Excellence** in scholarship, learning, teaching, research and service
- **Responsibility** for selves and our communities
- Identifying and nurturing **talent**
- **Interdisciplinary** perspectives
- Building **community** and connections
- **Diversity** of intelligences, life experiences, values and perspectives

Honors is the third largest college on campus following Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Eller College of Management, yet The Honors College occupies a unique niche in that all of our students are members of at least one other college. One in four Honors students is pursuing a double major or seeking two baccalaureate degrees.

Honors students achieve high levels of academic success during their undergraduate years and beyond. Fifty-six percent of Honors students graduate in 4 years and 79 percent graduate in 5 years compared to UA students overall with 33 percent for a 4-year graduation rate and 51 percent for a 5-year rate. The Honors College assists students in reaching their career goals. Forty-two percent of graduates of The Honors College continue on to graduate or professional school immediately upon graduation from the UA with another 10 to 15 percent deferring their post-baccalaureate work. Overall, three-

quarters of the students graduating with Honors plan to attend graduate or professional school within five years of graduation.

Abstract

The Honors College is a key factor in the decision process of high ability students to enroll at the UA. Because of increasing national competition, Honors needs to reinvent its recruitment effort to provide a consistent, explicit message about the advantages of membership in The Honors College and the opportunities for excellence available at the University of Arizona. The Honors College seeks funding to develop a recruitment process that will reach prospective students in new and creative ways. These efforts will include opportunities to meet current Honors students, faculty and the Dean at evening programs, school visits by Honors staff, and frequent communication from Honors Student Ambassadors and the Dean focused on issues of interest to high ability students (scholarships, study abroad, research, leadership and community). Annually, over 2,000 students are admitted to The Honors College. Improved communication and better information about the University of Arizona will recruit a more diverse and multi-talented student body. Communications with prospective students and their families will acknowledge support from and build recognition of the UA Parents and Family Association in the recruiting process. This new recruiting effort will affect other students and high school counselors by increasing the visibility of UA in students' milieu.

Statement of the Proposal

The University of Arizona competes nationally for outstanding students. In the current economic contexts, students and their families carefully weigh their educational options considering both the costs and benefits offered. The Honors College needs to reinvent its recruitment effort to highlight the advantages and opportunities available at the University of Arizona.

High ability students are predisposed to attend prestigious, highly ranked, selective institutions. They expect personal attention in the recruiting process and rely upon information, outcomes measures and input from fellow students more than the general college-bound student.

The Honors College admits approximately 2,500 students annually. The University of Arizona integrates admission, scholarships and Honors admission into a single application and notifies students about these in an integrated approach. Prospective students and their families remark that the information about Honors is difficult to notice and absorb in this approach. Many students do not know that Honors offers an information session Monday through Friday; others have specific questions and are unsure of where to address those questions. Many students and their family desire more interaction with Honors students, faculty and staff to insure that they have all the information they need to make their college choice.

This new recruitment program will help prospective students and their families appreciate the unique aspects of the UA Honors College. Because prospective students now do not have sufficient information they apply the policies and procedures of other schools (e.g. housing, orientation) to the UA. This recruitment plan will help students put the UA Honors first on their list. The effects of these recruitment efforts will extend beyond students, counselors and family members directly affected as these individuals will share their enhanced understanding of the reputation and opportunities available at the University of Arizona with other students, families, teachers and counselors in their social networks.

The new recruitment efforts will be based upon an overarching communication plan that will provide explicit, consistent messages about the academic quality of students and faculty at the UA, the rich array of opportunities, and the Honors advantage. Funding will enable The Honors College to develop new and creative communications involving new media such as blogs, personalized emails or instant messaging, and faculty connections.

The specific proposed activities include:

- Designing and implementing recruiting contacts using new media
- Initiating instant messaging, phonathons and live chats to engage prospective students in talking with current Honors students
- Hosting evening information sessions in Phoenix and Tucson to introduce prospective students and their families to the Honors advantage
- Doubling the number of high schools visited by The Honors College and adding Honors College Ambassadors (students), staff and faculty to the visits
- Partnering with UA Up Close to offer Honors specific sessions
- Initiate new overnight visitation program for students admitted to The Honors College
- Partner with local high schools on Common Reading program (piloted in 2009 with Sabino High School)

Itemized Budget

<i>Phoenix Honors Night</i>		\$ 2,700
Postage	\$ 500	
Printing	\$ 750	
Transportation	\$ 300	
Refreshments	\$ 650	
Facilities	\$ 500	
 <i>Tucson Honors Nights</i>		 \$ 2,000
Postage	\$ 300	
Printing	\$ 550	
Refreshments	\$ 1,150	
 <i>Visits to high schools</i>		 \$ 2,040

Six one-day visits to Phoenix high schools	\$ 540	
Mileage for Tucson and Southern Arizona	\$ 300	
Tucson Counselor lunch	\$ 400	
Phoenix Counselor lunches	\$ 800	
<i>Phonathons</i>		\$ 600
6 evenings' refreshments @ \$100	\$ 600	
phone charges	in-kind	
<i>Honors Student Ambassadors</i>		\$ 3,300
Training materials	\$ 300	
Refreshments	\$ 400	
Recruitment materials	\$ 2,200	
Facilities	\$ 100	
Travel	\$ 300	
Total requested		\$ 10,640

Contributions from UA Honors College:

Assistant Director for Recruitment and Outreach 75% of annual salary + ERE	\$49,304	
Program Coordinator +ERE	\$49,198	
Undergraduate student assistants + ERE	\$ 3,100	
Recruitment publications	\$ 4,775	
Recruitment operations	\$ 4,250	
Total allocated		\$110,627

The success of this recruitment program will be measured in the increase in the quality and diversity of the freshman Honors students. Specific measures to be used include:

Assessment of Desired Outcomes

1. Increased contact with prospective students and families
2. Pilot and evaluate use of new media in communication plan
3. Increase in number of students attending daily information sessions
4. Double the number of high school visits
5. Increase the quality of incoming Honors students
6. Increase the diversity of incoming Honors students in terms of first-generation status, ethnicity, rural backgrounds and state representation
7. Increase participation in programs for first-year students and sense of belonging on fall semester survey